

not by the grantee, but by the taxpayers. The taxpayers paid the bill for them to appeal mismanaging the taxpayers' dollars. Competition, I believe, an open competition, would go a long way towards solving that problem.

The effect of these abuses not only squandered taxpayer dollars, but it diverted resources from some of the neediest and most deserving members of our community. That is an outrage. We must expect better and we must do better. We cannot allow these types of abuses to become the norm. We should not maintain a system that simply continues the status quo. Let's expect providers of Head Start programs to compete with other potential providers, which, unlike during the creation of Head Start, today there are a number of State and local governments and private entities that can provide that service. Then we will truly be giving these needy children the head start they deserve.

I urge my colleagues to support the amendment.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I rise to oppose the amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, the Putnam amendment would jeopardize the seamless services that many high-quality Head Start programs with very deep roots in their communities provide to disadvantaged children. Because the quality of our Head Start programs is critical to ensuring that disadvantaged children receive the benefits of Head Start, this bill, which passed out with only one dissenting vote from committee, implements a new process to recompetit underperforming programs. The amendment by Mr. PUTNAM guts the bill's provision to ensure that high-quality Head Start programs do not have to recompetit for their grants.

They are reviewed by a panel of experts we put in place to look at them. They are reviewed and have to satisfy that review, but they do not then have to recompetit.

The Putnam amendment also eliminates the bill's provisions to ensure a fair and equitable process for recompetit underperforming Head Start programs. And we worked hard to get a fair and equitable process for that.

By striking those provisions, which he does in his amendment, the Department of Health and Human Services is authorized to create its own system for recompetit.

We worked hard with the Head Start community to try to ensure that we would have a panel of experts that would assure that the underperforming programs were really improved or put out of the system but not have the high performing have to go through the recompetit process every 5 years, but be reviewed by the panel of experts.

Mr. Chairman, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Chairman, I yield 30 seconds to the distinguished ranking member from California.

Mr. McKEON. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I think this is a good amendment that Mr. PUTNAM has put forth. I don't think we should fear competition. I think the idea that once a program is granted, it should have life-long tenure, I think, is something we should avoid. I think competition and accountability is good. Once every 5 years, programs that are good should not fear competing to keep the program for another 5 years. I think it is always good to have somebody coming up behind you that is going to make you do a little bit better.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. PUTNAM. Mr. Chairman, the amendment provides for competition among agencies that are given millions of dollars to manage programs for our neediest children. And unlike during the creation of the Head Start program, today across America there are thousands of potential providers. School boards are now in the early childhood business. United Way is now in the early childhood business. Local communities are now in the early childhood business, providing tremendous educational opportunities for our neediest young people before they enter kindergarten.

We want them to enter kindergarten ready to learn, and we want to guarantee that the grantees that are managing these precious Head Start dollars are running an adequate, professional, thoughtful program and being good stewards of the people's money. By providing for recompetit every 5 years, we are guaranteeing, as my ranking member friend from California said, that they understand that it is not their birthright to continue that.

I urge my friends to support this amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The question is on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida (Mr. PUTNAM).

The question was taken; and the Acting Chairman announced that the noes appeared to have it.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I demand a recorded vote.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to clause 6 of rule XVIII, further proceedings on the amendment offered by the gentleman from Florida will be postponed.

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MR. PORTER

The Acting CHAIRMAN. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 110-116.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, I offer an amendment.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Amendment No. 8 offered by Mr. PORTER:

Page 159, line 12, strike the close quotation and the period at the end.

Page 159, after line 12, insert the following:

“(g) STAFF RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION PROCEDURES.—Before a Head Start agency employs an individual, such agency shall—

“(1) conduct an interview of such individual;

“(2) verify the personal and employment references provided by such individual; and

“(3) obtain—

“(A) a State, tribal, or Federal criminal record check covering all jurisdictions where the grantee provides Head Start services to children;

“(B) a State, tribal, or Federal criminal record check as required by the law of the jurisdiction where the grantee provides Head Start services; or

“(C) a criminal record check as otherwise required by Federal law.”.

The Acting CHAIRMAN. Pursuant to House Resolution 348, the gentleman from Nevada (Mr. PORTER) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Nevada.

Mr. PORTER. Mr. Chairman, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

It is an honor to be here to talk about something very critical, I think, to our families and communities across the country.

If you recall, last year this body passed historic legislation providing for protection of our children in light of the abuse of our kids throughout schools across the country. We passed legislation to provide for 24 additional States to do background checks on teachers via FBI background and other means through law enforcement. Unfortunately, 24 States were not allowed to, for many different reasons, and that legislation provided for these background checks. Through my amendment that is being proposed today, close to a million kids that are in the Head Start program will have the same tools available to them that we passed just last year to help kids in K-12.

There is one tragic example. There is one grantee in this country that between 2001 and 2005 did not perform background checks on their employees. They finally did background checks. Out of 660 employees, close to 106 had criminal charges against them, including first degree murder, involuntary manslaughter, domestic abuse, assault, child abuse, DUI, and violent crimes.

Mr. Chairman, my language ensures that Head Start programs will have all the databases containing criminal records available to them to make sure that our parents can feel that their most precious resource, their children, will be safe in the Head Start program.

Mr. Chairman, I yield such time as he may consume to Ranking Member McKEON.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Chairman, I thank the gentleman for yielding.

And I have seen the work that he has done over the years in protecting children. I think that children are our most vital asset. And because of the risk out there of the kind of lawbreakers that he mentioned that we could eliminate by having a good, solid